

Before the  
Federal Communications Committee  
Washington D.C. 20554

In the Matter of )  
 )  
Comments - NBP Public Notice #16 ) GN Docket Nos. 09-47,  
09-51, 09-137

**Comments of Thomas W. West**

Thomas W. West hereby submits his comments in the above-captioned matter.

***Introduction***

So that you may know something about my professional perspective on this matter here is synopsis of my experiences. I have just completed five decades of management experience in the research and education community. I have served as a small college president, a vice chancellor for administration for regional campuses in a public university system; 26 years as the Chief Technology Officer (CTO) for two large public university systems—Indiana University (1973-1981) and the California State University (1981-1999); and the past ten (10) years as the President/CEO of two major not-for-profit corporations involved in developing and managing major advance networks for the research and education community—the Corporation for Education Network Initiative in California (CENIC) (1999-2004) and National LambdaRail, Inc. (NLR) (2003-October 2009).

***Comments***

**1. Measuring broadband adoption.**

For the foreseeable future the Commission should abandon any effort to measure broadband adoption rates. As the questions in this section demonstrate it would be a “black hole” endeavor that will never yield an accurate reading of adoption rates. Furthermore, the statements that the Recovery Act requires the NBP to

include a detailed strategy for achieving maximum utilization of broadband infrastructure and that maximum utilization can only be achieved by increasing broadband adoption rates need to be refuted. These need to be replaced by a more appropriate strategy statement of broadband utilization and for user adoption.

I recommend the Commission be singularly focused on creating a NBP to move this nation from “first generation broadband” to “next generation connectivity”, as recently described in a major study completed by the Harvard University Berkman Center for the FCC. As part of this NBP the detailed strategy needs to ensure the capacity of the broadband infrastructure can be expanded as utilization grows and adoption rates increase over time. At any given point in time the objective is to provide for optimum utilization of the infrastructure for the current user base. The strategy must be to never reach maximum utilization of the nation’s broadband infrastructure.

Also as part of the NBP the Commission should institute a framework and process for measuring how well this nation is progressing towards 100 percent “next generation connectivity” to every premise in this country. This framework can serve as the measurement of adoption.

## **2. Cost of digital exclusion.**

The most visible cost to individuals who are non-adopters will be the potential loss of income in the workplace. Technical and professional jobs will be, if not already, dependent upon having access to and the ability to use the resources made available via broadband networking. To quantify the loss the Commission might use the comparison of the high school dropout to a graduate as an indicator.

Having too high a percentage of non-adopters (over 10%) in our society will make the difference between the US continuing leadership in the world or becoming an also ran.

### **3. Barriers to adoption.**

The Pew Broadband study captures the major barriers. It all starts with every individual having baseline access to broadband. Access that is not affordable makes it doubly challenging. The other barriers listed only come into play if these two are removed.

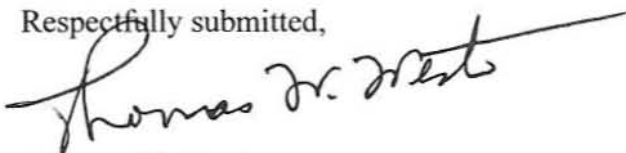
### **4. Overcoming barriers to adoption.**

- a. I suggest the Commission not get involved with recommending or creating programs to address affordability. Leave that to other agencies already engage in similar help programs.
- b. I suggest the Commission not get involved with recommending or creating programs to increase technology and digital literacy skills. Leave that to other agencies already engage in similar help programs.
- c. I suggest the Commission not get involved with recommending or creating programs to address the issue of non-adopters not seeing the relevance of using broadband. Leave that to other agencies already engage in similar help programs.

### **5. Learning from existing programs.**

No comment.

Respectfully submitted,



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